



RMC Legislative Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, March 27, 2023

Time: 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Type: Zoom Teleconference

Participants: Susan O'Neill, Don Mulrine, Greg Padgham, Amy Keller, Kimberly Kratovil, Lindsay Thompson, Jacinta Bottoms-Spencer, Chris Benzing, Janice Palmer, Alice Settle-Raskin, Bill Valentine, Steve McHenry, Christy Morrell, Bill Christopher, Alyssa Hastings, Scott Warner, Chloe Fletcher, John Hartline, Diana Hsu, Charlotte Davis, Josh Bollinger, Jackie Ward, Susanne Richards, Steve McHenry, Matt Teffeau, Kimberly Kratovil

Legislative Committee Co-chair Lindsay Thompson welcomed everyone and convened the meeting at 2:01. Ms. Thompson asked members for a motion to approve the March 13, 2023 meeting minutes. Mr. Don Mulrine made the motion to approve the minutes, Mr. Matt Teffeau seconded the motion. The March 13, 2023, meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

Ms. Thompson provided an update on HB200/SB181 – Budget Bill (Fiscal Year 2024). Ms. Thompson stated that the House Appropriations Committee voted favorable with amendment on March 3/10. Ms. Thompson asked members if they had any updates on the budget that they would like to share. Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that the budget bill was passed by the Senate on Friday, March 24, 2023 and it now heads to conference committee. Ms. Davis reported that the Budget and Taxation Committee put in an extra \$300,000 for the Rural Maryland Council and she believes it is in relation to the Council's Nonemergency Health Transportation Program, but she is not sure it will survive the conference committee. Mr. Steve McHenry reported that the only budget that needs to pass is the operating budget, which he believes will pass by the end of the week and the capital budget always follows the operating budget. Mr. McHenry stated that he believes budget cuts will take place in the subcommittees and the budget additions in the full committees after the subcommittees have reported.

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported on HB695-Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund – Revisions and Sunset Repeal (Rural Communities Improvement Act of 2023) with the hearing in the Senate, 3/29-Finance Committee. Ms. Davis stated that the bill was amended and now only includes expanding entrepreneurship to include Cooperative Development, Workforce Development and Agricultural Development. The House Committee struck out the mandated funds and the sunset date. Ms. Davis asked people to submit testimony to support as amended tomorrow, March 28, 2023. The Committee discussed the bill and they decided to continue to return until other provisions are met.

Ms. Charlotte Davis stated that HB596/SB511 – Health and Human Services Transportation Improvement Act of 2023 has been amended to remove the mandated funding and the pilot program. Ms. Davis stated that the Council is supporting it with amendments that will codify the coordinating committee and removing the caps on funding for senior rides and Job Access and Reverse Commute program. Ms. Davis further stated that the House Committee signed onto the bill as co-sponsors and she believes this bill is why RMC received an extra \$300,000 for the pilot program. Ms. Davis stated it's not certain if we will get the funding, but we should be prepared if we do. Additionally, Ms. Davis reported that the roundtables report will be finalized shortly.

Ms. Lindsay Thompson asked if there were other bills on the tracker that members would like to discuss or have questions about. Susanne Richards with MAEF reported that SB866 passed the Senate and was assigned to the Environment and Transportation Committee and the Appropriations Committee in the House. Ms. Richards thanked members for their support of the bill and asked for letters of support in the House. Mr. Steve McHenry provided an update on HB152, the urban grant fund bill. Mr. McHenry stated that he asked for an amendment to expand eligibility of urban area to include incorporated cities and towns with the aim that the smaller incorporated communities in the rural areas would be eligible for grant funds. Mr. McHenry stated that the House adopted this position and it had its hearing in the Senate last week.

The Committee began to discuss Maryland Day at 2:19pm and the teleconference call was hacked and Zoom bombed at that time. The meeting was shut down and a new Zoom link was sent via email out for members to rejoin. Ms. Thompson explained both by Zoom and in email that the meeting was hacked, and that the Committee apologized for the language and images and that the individuals that hacked the meeting were not affiliated with the Council.

Ms. Charlotte Davis reported that Maryland Day was held on March 24, 2023, and that the event was a success even in the rain. The Council gave out a total of 225 lunches. Ms. Lindsay Thompson stated that Sine Die is scheduled for April 10 and the Committee will meet again on April 17, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 2:32pm.